


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	Policy No. 710.2B	Date AUG 6 2018	Page 1
	Supersedes DBH Policy 710.2A, same subject, dated December 17, 2013		

Subject: Workplace Violence Prevention and Response

1. **Purpose.** To delineate policies and steps for addressing workplace violence prevention and response. This revision includes workplace bullying as one of the behaviors that DBH has zero tolerance.

2. **Applicability.** Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)-wide.

3. **Authority.** Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, Section 5(a) (1) and (2), (29 U.S. Code §654); District Personnel Manual (DPM), Part II, Chap. 18, "Employee Conduct", District Personnel Manual Chapter 16 Corrective and Adverse Actions; Enforced Leave; and Grievances; (Cross-references with DBH Policy 480.1 Reporting Major Unusual Incidents [MUIs] and Unusual Incidents [UIs]).

4. **Policy.**

4a. DBH is committed to providing a safe workplace that is free from violence or threats of violence. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, DBH has zero tolerance for behavior that is assaultive, intimidating, bullying, harassing or threatening to others; interferes with an individual's legal rights of movement or expression; or is disruptive to operations or service delivery.

4b. In responding to domestic violence, DBH shall maintain appropriate confidentiality and value the rights of the employee involved, and act in ways that maintain respect and dignity for individuals while addressing the situation in a safe and timely manner.

5. **Definitions.**

5a. **Workplace Violence.** Inappropriate behaviors occurring in the workplace include, but are not limited to intimidating or threatening behaviors, physical or verbal abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, carrying or possessing weapons of any kind on property owned/leased by the District of Columbia or otherwise using such weapons. Workplace violence can be inflicted by an employee, a manager, supervisor, co-worker, consumer, visitor, domestic members, or even a stranger.

5b. **Urgent Threats.** Situations related to workplace violence that are actively occurring which are life threatening or may impact immediate health and/or safety to a considerable degree (e.g., fighting; destruction of property; person makes a statement that they want to kill themselves or others; someone makes a statement that they will harm another; someone displays a gun, knife,

or other instrument that could cause harm; someone makes a statement that they will get a weapon; or someone is out of control by yelling, screaming, flailing arms, or throwing dangerous objects).

5c. Non-Urgent Threats. Workplace violence that does not create an immediate threat to health or safety, or behaviors that have the potential of becoming workplace violence within this policy.

5d. Assaultive, Intimidating, bullying or Harassing Behavior. Conduct which could create a hostile environment, impair operations, or frighten, alarm, inhibit, or hurt others (e.g., shouting, using obscenity, or swearing at someone). Physical intimidation or harassment may include holding, impeding or blocking movement, following, stalking, touching, or other inappropriate physical contact or advances, including attacks involving the use of a weapon, and actions such as workplace bullying, hitting, punching, pushing, or kicking. Intimidating or harassing behavior may cause bodily or emotional injury, pain and/or distress.

5e. Workplace. Refers to the building and its premises such as parking lots, or any District owned, leased or donated space, including vehicles, and any location where DBH business or sponsored activities are conducted.

(1) In the case of the employees whose duties are itinerant in nature, they are covered under this policy given that the workplace for them includes going to, from, and in settings where he or she conducts business (e.g., courts, consumer's residence, streets, schools, facilities, etc.).

(2) In the case of the employees who telecommute, the workplace refers to the actual building and premises to which the employee returns to, prepares and/or submits reports, etc. and where other administrative matters pertaining to the employee's employment are conducted (e.g., Behavioral Health Authority (BHA), Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP), Saint Elizabeths Hospital (SEH)). An employee's place of residence is not considered the workplace for purposes of this policy.

5f. Senior Staff. Refers to DBH upper management including the DBH Director, Senior Deputy Director and Behavioral Health Authority (BHA) employees who report directly to the Director and Senior Deputy Director.

5g. Major Reportable Incidents (MRIs). Refers to serious incidents that pose a significant danger, or that are likely to result or have resulted in serious consequences to the health and safety of the consumer and/or any individual and/or events that pose liability to DBH. Some of these incidents may also require criminal investigation.

5h. Weapon. Any device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, including but not limited to the following:

(1) Firearm which is a device designed to expel a projectile by action of an explosive;

the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer.

(2) Any destructive device that is an explosive or incendiary device such as bomb, or grenade.

(3) Any other item or device which may be used as a weapon (e.g., pocket knife with a blade greater than three (3) inches in length or any "look-a-like" object that resembles objects that have a potentially violent use) if under the surrounding circumstances, the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon.

(4) Any object that can easily cause harm/injury and is not explicitly authorized in the employee's line of work, such as baseball bat, golf club, nightstick, or metal object. The intent is not to bring objects to DBH work locations that can cause harm, and are not used/authorized for the work environment.

(5) Any other object that is used by an individual to cause serious bodily injury or death.

5i. Bodily injury. Injury involving loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty, or physical disfigurement, disease, sickness, or injury involving significant pain (DC Metropolitan Police definition).

5j. Order for Protection. A court order intended to protect a victim from domestic abuse or violence or threat of violence (e.g., Protection Order, No Contact Order, Restraining Order, Anti-Harassment Order).

5k. Workplace bullying. Occurs when an employee experiences a persistent pattern of mistreatment from others in the workplace that causes harm. It can include such tactics as verbal, nonverbal, psychological, physical abuse and humiliation.

6. Responsibilities.

6a. Senior Staff shall:

(1) Direct supervisors and managers in ensuring employee compliance with workplace security directives, policies and procedures;

(2) Advance actions that address or reduce systemic issues that are suspected or have been proven to contribute to workplace violence;

(3) Encourage management styles that promote a healthy work environment; and

(4) Be responsible in keeping abreast with and in implementing up-to-date best practices in workplace management.

6b. The Risk Manager shall:

- (1) Identify and mitigate risk exposures related to workplace violence within DBH including risks while providing services.
- (2) Conduct an internal investigation of the allegation.
- (3) Facilitate the development and implementation of a plan of action to address DBH risk exposures.
- (4) Ensure that information related to workplace violence is posted/distributed.
- (5) Work with DHR and other appropriate DBH managers and local authorities (if needed) in restoring the workplace to a safe and productive state after an act of violence.
- (6) Facilitate and/or conduct training on prevention and handling of violence in the workplace.
- (7) Facilitate and/or conduct activities on raising awareness on domestic violence issues that may affect the workplace.
- (8) Publish, maintain, and post in locations of high visibility, a list of resources for avoiding workplace violence.

6c. Managers and Supervisors shall:

- (1) Ensure that behaviors and actions that are likely to result in workplace violence are dealt with promptly, firmly and fairly. Disciplinary actions for violations will be consistent with DBH policies and procedures.
- (2) Publicize that DBH will not tolerate acts and behaviors that are likely to result in workplace violence and which may include but are not limited to abusive language, hitting or shoving, threats of bodily harm, threats or violence arising out of sexual or racial harassment, brandishing of an object which may be used as a weapon, insubordination, the sending of threatening, harassing or abusive e-mail and faxes, using the workplace to violate protective orders, bullying and stalking.
- (3) Ensure that all individuals under their responsibility receive a copy of this DBH workplace violence policy and have a written record of their acknowledgement (see Exhibit #1).
- (4) Ensure employee compliance with workplace security directives, policies and procedures.
- (5) Maintain appropriate professional relationship with employees.
- (6) Keep a written record of non-urgent threats knowing that no one signal alone should cause concern, but a combination of these call for concern and action.

(7) Document actions and materials provided to employee as a result of incidents related to workplace violence.

(8) Seek guidance on actions to take from the next supervisory level and/or DHR regarding the specific situation.

(9) Call the emergency number (9) 9-1-1 for urgent and/or potentially dangerous threats or acts of violence.

(10) Immediately separate/relocate the employee's workspace to a more secure area as much as possible.

(11) Facilitate limited disclosure of employee information over the telephone or directory (e.g., whereabouts, phone number, etc.).

6d. All Employees individuals at DBH facilities shall:

(1) Adhere to DBH policies and procedures.

(2) Interact responsibly with all and will not engage in workplace violence.

(3) Follow policies and procedures pertaining to workplace violence including participation in relevant training.

(4) Promptly report any acts of violence, threats, and intimidating or harassing behavior in the workplace to appropriate authorities (e.g., immediate supervisor, DHR Director or designee, local security officers, or DC Police) as appropriate.

(5) Seek appropriate assistance (e.g., EAP or the immediate supervisor) when experiencing stressful personal or work circumstances which may adversely affect productivity or lead to intimidating and harassing behavior.

(6) Inform appropriate persons in the agency (such as supervisors, DHR Director, and local security officers) about restraining orders and other protective court orders related to domestic situations for appropriate handling.

(7) Report any behavior categorized as workplace violence, regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior, to the supervisor, Risk Manager, and DHR Director.

6e. Division of Human Resources shall:

(1) Provide advice and assistance to managers and supervisors regarding appropriate personnel and administrative actions related to violent behavior, threats of violence, or other intimidating or harassing behavior.

(2) Implement relevant policies and procedures on pre-employment background checks to detect convictions related to workplace violence.

(1) Maintain appropriate documentation of employee training, personnel actions, and other pertinent information.

(2) Utilize resources such as Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist in the prevention and handling of workplace violence.

(3) Ensure confidential means for employees seeking assistance resource and referral information; special considerations at the workplace for employee safety, work schedule adjustments; or leave necessary to obtain medical, counseling, or legal assistance; and workplace relocation (if available).

(4) Notify the designated management representative of any threats which they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received including those related to domestic violence.

(5) Instruct designated management representatives to report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out on a DBH site or is connected to DBH employment.

(6) Refer employee to EAP or external professionals to help employee in the development of a safety plan.

(7) Work with local law enforcement personnel, and encourage employees to do so regarding situations outside the workplace.

7. Reporting Requirements.

7a. Reporting Urgent Threats.

Step 1. Call 9-911

Step 2. Once you are safe, call the Risk Manager, to report the situation.

Step 3. Report the situation to your supervisor and the Director, Division of Human Resources (DHR).

Step 4. Follow the DBH major incident notification procedures (DBH Policy 480.1A).

7b. Reporting Non-Urgent Threats.

Step 1. Report the situation to the Risk Manager.

Step 2. Report the situation to your supervisor.

7c. When an Employee may be a perpetrator, the supervisor shall:

Step 1. Contact the Risk Manager to discuss any actual, reported or suspected improper conduct and determine the course of action that is most appropriate.

Step 2. If an employee who may be a perpetrator asks for help, refer the employee to DHR who can make referrals to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Step 3. Document and maintain records of times the employee may have engaged in inappropriate behavior or used DBH resources such as work time, electronic communication technologies, mail, etc. to engage in harassing, threatening or abusive behavior.

7d. When the Supervisor may be a perpetrator, the employee shall:

Step 1. Contact the Risk Manager to discuss any actual, reported or suspected improper conduct and determine the course of action that is most appropriate.

Step 2. Notify the next level supervisor and the head of the unit, division or office.

Step 3. Notify the DHR Director about the situation.

Step 4. Document inappropriate behavior (e.g., harassing, threatening or abusive behavior) complete with location, date, time, witnesses, if any, and actions taken.

7e. Employees (including supervisors) who feel threatened by another employee shall:

Step 1. Contact the Risk Manager to discuss any actual, reported or suspected improper conduct and determine the course of action that is most appropriate.

Step 2. Document, with place, date and time when behaviors that can be classified as workplace violence occurs, including actions taken by relevant parties.

7f. Threats from Visitors and Strangers

Step 1. Alert the Security Guard.

Step 2. Let nearby co-worker know about the situation to readily call for help.

Step 3. Follow Steps 1-4 in Section 6a above, Reporting Urgent Threats; and Steps 1- 2 in Section 6b above, Reporting Non-Urgent Threats, as applicable.

7g. Threats from a Consumer (see Section 7b (1) for proactive measures).

Step 1. Alert the Security Guard.

Step 2. Let nearby co-worker know about the situation to readily call for help.

Step 3. Follow Steps 1-4 in Section 6a above, Reporting Urgent Threats; and Steps 1-2 in Section 6b above, Reporting Non-Urgent Threats, as applicable.

7h. For employees experiencing domestic violence, consider the following:

(1) Save any threatening e-mail or voice-mail messages as proof.

- (2) Seek a protective order that includes the DBH as a protected area, and keep a copy on hand at all times.
- (3) Consider providing a copy of the Order for Protection to the police, his/her supervisor, security, DHR, and/or Risk Manager.
- (4) Provide a picture of the perpetrator to reception areas and/or security.
- (5) Identify an emergency contact person should DBH be unable to contact the victim.
- (6) If an absence from work is deemed appropriate, be clear about the plan to return to work. While absent, maintain contact with the appropriate DHR personnel and supervisor.

8. **Major Reportable Incidents.** All urgent and/or potentially dangerous threats or acts of violence are to be reported per DBH Policy on Major and Unusual Incident Reporting Procedures.

9. **Non-Compliance.** Any DBH employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the District Personnel Manual, up to and including termination.

10. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this policy should be directed to DHR at 202-673-3525.

11. **Exhibit.**

Exhibit 1 - Policy Receipt Acknowledgement for DBH Policy 710.2B Workplace Violence Prevention and Response.

Approved By:

Tanya A. Royster
Director, DBH

V. D. [Signature] 8-6-18
(Signature) for TAR (Date)

Policy Receipt Acknowledgement for
DBH Policy 710.2B Workplace Violence Prevention and Response
Effective Date: _____

This is to acknowledge that I have read the **Workplace Violence Prevention and Response** policy published on the DBH website:
<https://dbh.dc.gov/node/240592>.

I agree to abide by the policy as a condition of my employment and my continuing employment at DBH.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the **Workplace Violence Prevention and Response** policy, I will consult with my immediate supervisor or Division of Human Resources Director or designee.

Employee Signature: _____

Employee Printed Name: _____

Date: _____